

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 EB-11 /125 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/WE:RPGALLAGHER:JKB

APPROVED BY EUR - JARMITAGE

EUR/WE - RDVINE

EUR/EE - HGILMORE (SUBS)

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P 282139Z MAR 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 062586

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, YU

SUBJECT: ITALIAN-YUGOSLAV ISSUE OVER ZONE B

1. ITALIAN EMBASSY MINISTER TAMAGNINI DISCUSSED RECENT ZONE B ISSUE WITH DEPUTY ASST SEC ARMITAGE TODAY. TAMAGNINI SAID ROME HAD NOT INSTRUCTED EMBASSY TO MAKE DEMARCHE, BUT THAT HIS AMBASSADOR FELT THE MATTER SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH THE US. TAMAGNINI SAID BELGRADE'S REACTION INTRIGUED THE ITALIANS. HE EXPLAINED THAT A ROUTINE NOTE PROTESTING THE ERECTION OF THE OFFENDING SIGNS WAS GIVEN TO THE GOY. HE CLAIMED A PRECEDENT FOR THIS OCCURRED IN 1964; THE GOY PUT UP SIGNS, ROME COMPLAINED AND THE SIGNS CAME DOWN. THIS TIME, TAMAGNINI OBSERVED, THE YUGOSLAV REPLY WAS ON A DIFFERENT NOTE AND SURPRISED ITALY. THE GOY NOTE ASSERTED THERE WAS NOW A "NEW BORDER BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND ITALY" AND THAT YUGOSLAVIA EXERCISED "FULL SOVEREIGNTY OVER ZONE B."

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2. TAMAGNINI EMPHASIZED THAT THIS CLAIM WAS NOT VALID, AS THE LINE IS NOT A STATE BORDER BUT A DEMARCATION LINE ESTABLISHED BY THE 1954 LONDON MEMORANDUM. HE SAID GOOD ITALO-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS HAVE DEVELOPED AND THE SIGNS CONTRADICTED WHAT BOTH SIDES HAVE DONE OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS. TAMAGNINI STRESSED ITALY WANTS THIS MISUNDERSTANDING CLEARED UP. IT WAS RIDICULOUS TO THINK ITALY WAS

TRYING TO UNDERMINE YUGOSLAV SOVEREIGNTY, BUT BELGRADE IS TAKING THE ISSUE IN A DIFFERENT WAY, HE NOTED. TAMAGNINI SPECULATED THAT YUGOSLAV INTERNAL REASONS, EITHER A NEED TO SHOW THE FLAG OR A LOCAL SLOVENE DEMAND FOR ACTION, CAUSED BELGRADE'S POSTURE.

3. THE ITALIAN MINISTER SAID TODAY'S WASHINGTON POST SMALL ARTICLE LINKING THE ZONE B DISPUTE WITH THE ITALIAN CANCELLATION OF YUGOSLAV BEEF EXPORTS WAS ERRONEOUS AND MISLEADING. HE EXPLAINED THAT BEEF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS OCCURRED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, WITHIN THE EC FRAMEWORK, AND INCLUDED ALL COUNTRIES. THE RESTRICTIONS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PRESENT ZONE B ISSUE.

4. DEPUTY ASST SEC ARMITAGE THANKED THE MINISTER FOR PRESENTING ITALY'S POSITION. HE POINTED OUT THE US STAND WAS CLEAR AND FOLLOWED OUR POSITION SET FORTH IN 1954: WE VIEW THE 1954 LONDON MEMORANDUM AS A POSITIVE STEP AND RECOGNIZE THE ARRANGEMENTS SET FORTH IN THE AGREEMENT AS THE MEANS BY WHICH BOTH SIDES CAN RESOLVE DIFFERENCES. HE NOTED THE US POSITION REMAINED ONE OF NOT BECOMING INVOLVED IN THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DISCUSSIONS. ARMITAGE STRESSED THAT WE HOPE ITALO-YUGOSLAV BILATERAL TALKS, CONDUCTED IN A FRIENDLY AND CONSTRUCTIVE SPIRIT, WILL SOLVE THE CURRENT DISPUTE.

5. IN REPLY TO ARMITAGE'S QUERY ON THE STATUS OF THE BORDER COMMISSION TALKS, TAMAGNINI SAID THE COMMISSION WAS CONCERNED WITH DEFINING THE BORDER NORTH OF THE TRIESTE TERRITORY AND WITH REGULATING BORDER CROSSINGS AT THE STATE BORDERS AND ALONG THE DEMARCATION LINE. HE SAID THE COMMISSION DISCUSSED FREE MOVEMENTS ACROSS THE

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DEMARCATION LINE, BUT NOT THE STATUS OF THE LINE ITSELF. TAMAGNINI NOTED THAT BEFORE TITO'S 1971 VISIT TO ITALY, BELGRADE SUGGESTED DISCUSSING THE STATUS OF THE LINE AND ZONE B, BUT THAT MORO TURNED IT DOWN, CLAIMING IT WOULD NEEDLESSLY IRRITATE AN AMICABLE SITUATION OF A FREE AND OPEN BORDER AND GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONS. TAMAGNINI POINTED OUT THE YUGOSLAV MARCH 19 NOTE MENTIONED ONLY THE 1954 LONDON MEMORANDUM AND MADE NO REFERENCE TO ANY

OTHER DISCUSSIONS. HE OBSERVED THAT ITALY KNEW THIS TEMPORARY SETTLEMENT WAS BOUND TO BECOME FINAL BUT THAT IT WAS PRESENTLY TOO DIFFICULT FOR ROME TO SAY "FINAL" ALOUD.

6. REPLYING TO ARMITAGE'S QUESTION, THE ITALIAN MINISTER SAID THE SITUATION IN TRIESTE WAS CALM, WITH NO DEMONSTRATIONS. ON THE DATE OF BELGRADE'S NOTE TO ROME, THE GOY

ORGANIZED A PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION IN CAPODISTRIA (KOPER) IN ZONE B. HE SAID NO INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED BETWEEN THE YUGOSLAV AND ITALIAN POPULATIONS IN THE AREA.

7. ARMITAGE EXPLAINED THE YUGOSLAVS HAD SEEN US ON THE ISSUE; WE TOLD THEM IT SHOULD BE SETTLED PEACEFULLY BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. ARMITAGE SAID THE YUGOSLAVS FOCUSED ON THE REASSERTION OF ITALIAN CLAIMS TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER ZONE B. TAMAGNINI ASSERTED THAT ROME DID NOT GO THAT FAR; ITALY MERELY SAID IN THE MARCH 11 NOTE THAT "YUGOSLAV SOVEREIGNTY HAS NEVER BEEN EXTENDED TO ZONE B." HE SAID THE GOY OBJECTED TO THAT STATEMENT. TAMAGNINI CLOSED BY STRESSING THAT ITALY IS CONTENT WITH THE "TEMPORARY SOLUTION" TO ZONE B AND DOES NOT WANT IT RAISED TO AN OFFICIAL LEVEL. RUSH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, BOUNDARY CLAIMS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE062586
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RPGALLAGHER:JKB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740068-0233
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974036/aaaaafx.d.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <31 JAN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ITALIAN-YUGOSLAV ISSUE OVER ZONE B
TAGS: PFOR, IT, YO, (ARMITAGE, JOHN A), (TAMAGNINI, GIULIO)
To: BELGRADE ZAGREB
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005